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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Utah State Office

P.O. Box 45155

Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155

<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en.html>



IN REPLY REFER TO:

3484

Willow Creek mine

(UT-923)

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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining

Coal Regulatory Program

P.O. Box 145801

Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801

Re: Inspection of the Willow Creek mine portal reclamation.

Dear Ms. Dean:

On April 24, 2008, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted an inspection of the Willow Creek mine portal reclamation area. At the time of mine closure, BLM required installation of pipes through the seals in the Willow Creek Mine portals to drain any water that might back up against the seals and relieve the pressure on the seals. Installation of the piping was required because the Willow Creek mine submitted a diagram that concluded the water could reach the portal seals. Pipes and p-traps were installed in 4 of the 5 entries.

During the April 24 inspection, BLM found no evidence that the pipes extended through the material placed over the seals. Even though the portals are on private lands, the coal behind the portals is federally owned and BLM is concerned that if the pipes are buried, then the water may breach the seals and wet the reclaimed material, thus creating a potential landslide situation. In 43 CFR 3484.2(b) BLM is to notify the regulatory authority whether the permanent abandonment of mining operations adequately protects the coal and other resources. Without further information, BLM questions the adequacy of the reclamation because the pipes were not carried out from under the reclaimed area.

BLM requests any information that you might have on this subject to resolve our concern.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Stan Perkes (801-539-4036) of my staff.

Sincerely,

for William Bue

James F. Kohler

Chief, Branch of Solids Minerals

cc: Price Field Office
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